Catholics of the English Race

Adan, M.A.

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Appendix: Summary of contents

This thesis addresses the question how peoples (Latin *gentes*) were envisioned as ecclesiastical communities in early Anglo-Saxon England, *c.* 700-800. The *Introduction* provides historical background on early Anglo-Saxon England and early medieval Christianity, and situates this thesis within wider scholarly discussions about early medieval ethnicity and the early medieval church. *Chapter One* examines Anglo-Saxon perceptions of ethnicity, arguing that a *gens* was defined primarily as an extended kin-group. Because of the flexible nature of this definition, a person could belong to multiple "nested" or overlapping *gentes*. The Anglo-Saxon *gentes* were understood to be separated from their continental cousins primarily by their territory and their faith. *Chapter Two* studied the Anglo-Saxon assumption that conversion was something that could be undergone by a *gens* collectively. It explores Anglo-Saxon perspectives on the role of the *gens* in conversion, and the importance of conversion for the continuing relevance of the *gens* as a category within the universal church. Complementing existing scholarship on the practical and political importance of ethnic or national collectives to the process of conversion in early medieval Europe, this chapter argues that Anglo-Saxon thinkers ascribed a theological significance to the conversion of peoples. It argues that conversion narratives imbued *gentes* with spiritual legitimacy and permanence, selectively reinforcing existing ethnic classifications. *Chapter Three* discusses Anglo-Saxon veneration of Pope Gregory I as the "apostle of the English". It argues that to venerate Gregory in this way served to express and strengthen a sense of belonging to the English *gens*. Recognition of Gregory's apostolic authority also had practical consequences, attaching particular weight to Gregory's instructions for the English church, whether liturgical or organizational. This chapter suggests that both the idea of the *Angli* and Gregorian ideals for the Anglo-Saxon church were most enthusiastically championed in the dioceses of Canterbury and York. *Chapter Four* turns to Bede and his view of the desired relation of *gentes* to the episcopal organization of the Anglo-Saxon church. It argues Bede was deeply committed to the realization of Pope Gregory I's scheme for the organization of the church in Britain: a northern and a southern province headed by two metropolitans each overseeing twelve bishops. Bede therefore advocated the establishment of a greater number of bishoprics, even when this disrupted the correspondence between (arch)bishoprics and *gentes*. *Chapter Five* studies the bishoprics of Hereford and Worcester, arguing that while the bishopric of Hereford was presented in eighth-century sources as one of several Mercian bishoprics, the bishopric of Worcester

was seen throughout the eighth century as serving the *gens* of the Hwicce. Finally, *Chapter Six* argues that the elevation of the see of Lichfield to metropolitan status, which was achieved by King Offa of Mercia at the end of the eighth century, was an attempt to give the Mercian *gens* institutional expression in the Anglo-Saxon church as an archbishopric, and so to afford it a more prominent place among the *gentes* of Anglo-Saxon England than it was afforded in (Bede's interpretation of) the Gregorian scheme. It is suggested that the short lifespan of this archbishopric was due not only to the changing political fortunes of the Mercian kingdom, but also to the growing popularity of the idea of the *Angli*. The *Conclusion* summarizes the arguments of the preceding six chapters, and highlights the diversity of early Anglo-Saxon approaches to the place of *gentes* in the church.